TREASURY DEPARTMENT

Washington

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Nellie Tayloe Ross, Director of the Mint, today announced the appointment by the President of the 1940 members of the Annual Assay Commission which will meet at the United States Mint at Philadelphia at 10 o'clock Wednesday, February 14, in the traditional ceremony held each year for the "trial of the coins."

Members of the Commission are:

Nat Bass, 571 8th Avenue, New York City.
Mrs. Marguerita D. Bodziak, 500 Delaware Trust Building, Wilmington, Delaware.
Mrs. Agnes Collins Dunn, 21 Merrimack Street, Concord, New Hampshire.
Mrs. Mervil E. Haas, Riverton, New Jersey.
Mrs. Douglas Brown, 1601 5th Avenue, Huntington, West Virginia.
Mrs. George Backer, 944 5th Avenue, New York City.
Dr. L. J. Briggs, Director, Bureau of Standards, Washington, D. C.
Mr. Samuel Regalbuto, 801 Marlyn Road, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
Dr. Tipton R. Snavely, University of Virginia, University, Virginia.
Dr. George H. Meeker, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
Dr. C. F. McClintic, Williamsburg, West Virginia.

Ex-Officio members:

Judge William H. Kirkpatrick, United States District Court, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
Preston Delano, Comptroller of the Currency, Washington, D.C.
Joseph S. Buford, Chief Assayer, United States Assay Office, New York City.

The 1940 test to be made by the Commission will be one of the largest tasks in its history, for this year 79,847 coins await examination, a total of 159,608,050 silver coins having been struck off by the Mint last year. The Commission is one of the oldest institutions in the Government, having been created in 1792.

At the United States Mints at Philadelphia, Denver and San Francisco, not less than one silver coin of every 2,000 delivered from the coining room must be reserved for test by the Commission to determine whether the coins conform to legal requirements as to weight and fineness.

The sample coins are required to be sealed and carefully preserved in a "pyx" under the joint care of the Superintendent and Assayer for delivery to the Commission. The word "pyx" in the law is derived from "pyx-chest," a receptacle for new English coins once kept in the Chapel of the Pyx in Westminster Abbey, London.

For the 1940 test, the 79,847 coins were reserved at the three United States coinage mints and are now assembled at the Philadelphia Mint in the manner proscribed by law. The coins are carefully guarded in the "pyx" at Philadelphia awaiting trial by the Commission.

Mrs. Ross will be present at the Philadelphia ceremony. Dr. L. J. Briggs, Director of the Bureau of Standards, will carry with him from Washington the official weights of the Bureau of the Mint, which have been calibrated at the Bureau of Standards for the annual test of the coinage.

The law specifies that sample coins deposited by superintendents of the coinage mints for the annual test shall "be sealed by the Superintendent in an envelope on which shall be inscribed the place of coinage, the date, number and amount of delivery, the number and denomination of pieces inclosed, and a certificate signed by the Superintendent and Assayer that the facts are as stated."

The sealed parcels, the law provides, shall be deposited in a pyx, designated for the purpose at each Mint, to be kept under the joint care of the Superintendent and Assayer and be secured so that neither can have access to its contents without the presence of the other. The law directs that the reserved pieces from the coinage of Mints other than the Philadelphia Mint, shall, in their sealed envelopes, be transmitted quarterly by express or registered mail to the Mint at Philadelphia, where they shall be carefully preserved in a pyx under the joint care of the Superintendent and Assayer, for delivery to the Annual Assay Commission.

That great historical import has always been attached to the appointment of the members of the Commission is evidenced by the names of several illustrious appointees. Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall, and Alexander Hamilton have at one time served as members.

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